

PROCEEDINGS
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RATTUS TURKESTANICUS (SATUNIN, 1903),
THE VALID NAME FOR *RATTUS RATTOIDES*
HODGSON, 1845 (MAMMALIA: RODENTIA)

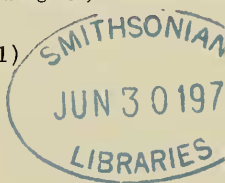
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Hodgson (1845: 267) described *Mus rattoides* in a report on some rodents and shrews from central Nepal. However, Sherborn (1930: 5437) listed *Mus rattoides* Pictet and Pictet, 1844, immediately above *Mus rattoides* Hodgson, 1845. To our knowledge the status of the Pictet and Pictet name has never been clarified.

Pictet and Pictet (1844) named and described three new rodents in a report on a collection of rodents from Bahia, Brazil. Two of these, *Mus cinnamomeus* (*loc. cit.*: 64) and *Mus maculipes* (*loc. cit.*: 67), were named in a section concerning rodents native to the Americas. For the status of these names see Hershkovitz (1960).

In a section dealing with rodents introduced into Brazil from the Old World, Pictet and Pictet (1844) reported the presence of two species: *Mus decumanus* Pallas [= *Rattus norvegicus* (Berkenhout)] and *Mus musculus* Linnaeus; and described a new species, *Mus rattoides* (*loc. cit.*: 45). This new species was supposedly closely allied to and scarcely distinct from *Mus rattus* Linnaeus, *Mus tectorum* Savi [= *Rattus rattus*] and *Mus leucogaster* Pictet [= *Rattus rattus*]. From the description, measurements, and plates of two specimens in a life-like pose plus lower cheek teeth given by Pictet and

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Pictet (1844), we believe that the name *Mus rattoides* Pictet and Pictet is a junior synonym of *Rattus rattus* (Linnaeus). In any event, the characters given by Pictet and Pictet (1844) in their description of this new species, especially the presence of a long and unicolored tail, preclude *Mus rattoides* Pictet and Pictet from being a senior synonym of *Mus rattoides* Hodgson. In addition, to our knowledge, *Mus rattoides* Hodgson, 1845, has been reported only from a relatively restricted area of southcentral Asia and never as an exotic or commensal species from anywhere else in the world.

Since the name *Mus rattoides* Hodgson (1845) is preoccupied by and consequently a homonym of *Mus rattoides* Pictet and Pictet (1844), the next available name for this species is *Rattus turkestanicus* (Satunin, 1903). A brief synonymy for the species as we recognize it follows:

Rattus turkestanicus (Satunin, 1903)

- 1845. *Mus rattoides* Hodgson, Ann. Nat. Hist., 15: 267, April (type locality: Nepal).
- 1903. *Mus turkestanicus* Satunin, Ann. Mag. St. Petersburg, 7: 588, April (type locality: Assam-bob, Fergana, Uzbekistan S.S.R.).
- 1903. *Mus vicerex* Bonhote, Ann. Nat. Hist., 11: 473, May (type locality: Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India) [recognized as a valid subspecies].
- 1913. *Epimys rattus shigarus* Miller, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 26: 198, 13 October (type locality: Shigar, Baltistan, Kashmir) [recognized as a valid subspecies.]

Until a taxonomic review is made of *R. turkestanicus*, we prefer to recognize only three subspecies formerly assigned to *R. rattoides*. Of the holotypes of these three taxa we have examined only that of *R. t. shigarus* (Miller, 1913).

The nominate subspecies occurs in the U.S.S.R. in Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan, southern and western Khirgiz and in southern Khazakhstan (Bobrinskii, *et al.*, 1965: 299); in northern and eastern Afghanistan (Hassinger, 1968: 74); and in extreme eastern Iran (Etemad, 1964: 652). *Rattus turkestanicus*

cus turkestanicus is characterized by stiff, brownish dorsal and whitish ventral fur.

Rattus turkestanicus shigarus (Miller, 1913) is a pale colored, whitish bellied, spinous-furred subspecies generally restricted to the extremely xeric parts of northern Kashmir and northern West Pakistan. Also included in this subspecies may be specimens from comparable xeric areas of Afghanistan.

Rattus turkestanicus vicerex (Bonhote, 1903), occurring in Sikkim, Nepal, northern India, and adjacent parts of West Pakistan south of the range of *R. t. shigarus*, has darker brown, soft dorsal and grayish ventral fur.

Ellerman and Morrison-Scott (1951: 588) and Ellerman (1961: 594) included the name *Mus vicerex* Bonhote (1903) as a synonym of *Rattus rattoides turkestanicus* based on a division of the species into a dull or gray-bellied race (nominate *rattoides* from Nepal) and white-bellied race (*turkestanicus* from Russia, West Pakistan, and northern India). We prefer to retain the name *vicerex* for those animals from the eastern part of the range of *R. turkestanicus* until such time as a critical review of the species is completed. If specimens from West Pakistan and northern India, here assigned to *vicerex*, are referable to the nominate subspecies as proposed by earlier authors and specimens from Nepal and Sikkim prove to be racially distinct, then it will be necessary to propose a new name for those animals from the eastern portion of the range of the species. The occurrence and taxonomic status of this species in Tibet and Sinkiang Province, China, is unclear at this time.

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